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ON CONVERSATION.

Few things produce, in fact, so small a portion of their possible benefits as conversation. Indeed, though we have abundance of chat or talk in our social meetings ; of conversation, truly deserving the name, we have very little. On this subject, I offer the following remarks and directions to the younger readers of the Magazine. Full well do I remember the time, when even these would have been useful to me.

The proper ends of conversation I take to be two ; namely, instruction, and relaxation from labour. And these ought to be, as much as possible, united. Time is too precious to be wasted in mere amusement ; and our very relaxations should be something better than trifling ; should be marked with something worthy of rational and immortal beings. The tongue has been, with great felicity, called “ the glory of our frame.” Shall we degrade so high a gift, by employing it to so low and culpable a purpose, as the murdering of time ? They who do so, will have a serious account to render for the abuse.

The prime and most obvious requisite to good conversation is knowledge. We should converse with a view to improvement as well as entertainment ; and there is an exquisite pleasure, to minds rightly trained, in the communication and reception of bright ideas and valuable information. No individual can know every thing. But every one who enters a company ought to contribute some share of sentiment to the

common stock. I am far from wishing that conversation should be always, or even most commonly, moulded into a trial of intellectual strength, in the way of argument and disputation. This would destroy its ease and sweetness. Yet if conversation be not an intellectual commerce, it degenerates into flatness and insipidity. And what can ignorance contribute to such a commerce? It is really a piece of daring hardihood, for a lazy, stupid animal, to enter the society of men of sense; a hardihood, however, which will meet its punishment in the disgust and contempt which it cannot fail to excite. I speak not of that involuntary ignorance which may arise from youth, or other inevitable circumstances; and which merits a very different consideration.

And this leads me to observe, that the next best substitute for knowledge in the social circle, is a modest, candid spirit, ready to acknowledge ignorance, and willing to be instructed. There is something exceedingly lovely and attractive in such a temper. The humble enquirer, too, has a ready access to all the stores of information, with which he may be surrounded. There are persons whose minds are full of important matter, but who have not the faculty of a graceful, spontaneous communication. A key must be applied to unlock their treasures. That key is ingenuous curiosity. To such a mind nothing can be more soothing, nothing more gratifying. If you are ignorant, be not ashamed to let it be seen; but question respectfully those who can inform you, and who will delight in answering your questions. This is the way to gain wisdom. And I add, it is far more honorable in the eyes of all judicious people, than the sullen, unsocial silence with which ignorance often endeavors to conceal itself, or to pass itself off upon the company for profound reflection.

As I do not address myself to coarse, impious, or debauched minds, I shall not condescend formally to denounce profaneness, obscenity, double entendre, and the like abominations. Away with these, to their appropriate caverns of filth and vulgarity.

But there are moral qualities which must be brought into view; as they are equally necessary with mental furniture, in order to agreeable and useful conversation. The first of these is a sacred regard to truth. In relating matters of fact, many seem to think it allowable to embellish the story, more or less, by the addition of fictitious circumstances. These may illustrate the narrator's inventive powers, and please the hearer for a moment, by adding an air of the marvellous to common events. But they soon diminish that confidence

which we should aim to enjoy ; and moreover involve the guilt of sporting with truth and falsehood. You may, for our amusement, play with your own veracity, until you seriously impair it, and render us unable to place reliance upon your simplest assertions. In matters of discussion the case is not very different. If you must argue a point, argue it honestly. Contend with your best skill, for what you conscientiously believe to be truth, and for no other end whatever. Sophistry is a hateful exercise of mental power. Suppose you indulge in it, and with success—suppose that in a cause which you know to be wrong, you have reduced your opponent to silence ; what have you gained in the contest ? A victory for which you ought to blush ; and the indignation of every enlightened and upright beholder. It is not easy, I acknowledge, to admit the force of evidence against a preconceived opinion. But we must labour to do it always, if we would advance in wisdom. It is still less easy to own that we have been in error, and that we are defeated by the weapons of truth. But in proportion as this is difficult, it is truly noble and magnanimous. How highly do I honor the man, who can say, I have been wrong, and am glad to be set right ! After all, why should it be so great a trial of our candor and humility to use this language ? Is it not the same thing, asks a fine writer, as to say, I am wiser to day than I was yesterday ? Alas, pride is frequently as foolish as it is wicked.

Learn to conform your speech and deportment in company, to your relative situation. In our republican country, we have broken down many of the distinctions of rank which exist, and the consequent submissions which are required, in the old world. But are we not in danger of carrying this levelling principle too far ? Surely some deference is due to those who fill important offices in society, especially to those who fill them with dignity. Surely it is right that youth should pay regard to grey hairs, and bend with reverential attention to the voice of long observation and experience. Far greater is the honor, which you will obtain by such a behaviour, than any which you can derive from obtruding your unfledged ideas upon your superiors in age or station.

Endeavor to contribute your portion to the feast of conversation. An excessive disposition to be silent, and to listen to others, is not indeed a very common fault. But it is sometimes committed. If the company is not more numerous than it ought to be, and if it consists of the right kind of materials, all will expect and wish, that each individual take his part in the discourse. Politeness induces them to wait to

hear you in your turn. And if you have nothing to say, and nothing to ask, they are disappointed. They conclude that you are too silly for the place you occupy ; or still worse, that you are proudly indifferent about pleasing your company, or receiving pleasure from them.

But on the other hand, take care, I beseech you, not to arrogate more than your proper share of the time and attention of those around you. Let not eagerness to speak prompt you to interrupt another ; or to seize the discourse before you ascertain that he has finished what he had to say. This is a rudeness very frequently exemplified when a lively interest is excited ; but no frequency of its exhibition can ever render it tolerable. Above all, avoid the making of set speeches in conversation. The practice is so magisterial and overbearing, so destructive of the very nature of conversation, that it infallibly inspires us with strong feelings either of ridicule or resentment. To escape this snare, cultivate the talent of expressing your thoughts in as few and as well-chosen words as possible.

It becomes me, who have no wit in the world, to speak with great modesty of the use of so rare and so important a faculty. It is a delicate and dangerous weapon, and one which should be cautiously employed. Let it be directed, with its sharpest point, against presumption and arrogance ; against licentiousness and folly ; but let it never inflict a wound upon virtue, or unassuming weakness. Have you the command of quick and pungent repartee ? Use it for innocent pleasantry, or to reduce impertinence to order. But beware how you sting those, who are not meddling with you, and who are unable to retort upon you. There is something mean as well as cruel in such conduct. You may raise a laugh by your smartness ; but this is a poor compensation for the probable loss of a friend, and the disapprobation of all who have witnessed the deed. The man who is known to indulge in the indiscriminate severity of wit, and to sport with the pain of his victims, excites alarm wherever he goes ; and obliges all companies to unite against him in a common hostility.—All freedom and ease are to be exchanged for gloomy restraint ; or the mischievous wit is to be banished from the circle, as a nuisance which mars its enjoyments.

In the mean while, cherish in your breast that charity which “thinketh no evil.” We have heard much of evil-speaking, in all its detestable variety of forms. I wish we could get a good lecture on evil-hearing also. There is in some minds a vile suspiciousness ; a restless jealousy ; a propensity to hunt for insults and injuries, and to find them

where they do not exist. This disposition to watch for mischief, and to torture whatever is said to the worst possible meaning, and even to meanings that are impossible upon any reasonable construction, is death to the benefit and the pleasure which ought to be the ends of conversation.

As there is a general tendency in conversation to sink into frivolity, and into depths still lower than that; such, for instance, as scandal against our neighbor; it becomes a rule of the utmost importance, that we take care to keep our discourse up to the level of something dignified and useful. Yes; in those moments when we most completely unbend our minds, and remove all customary restraints from the current of thought and of speech, let us remember that the great God is still present with us; that his eye is continually upon us; and that "for every idle word" he will bring us into judgment. That we are tied up never to speak of any thing but religion, or that we are forbidden to indulge in the cheerfulness of social intercourse, I do not believe. But it is the command of God that "our speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt; that no corrupt communication proceed out of our mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." These are serious admonitions indeed. And here I cannot help remarking what a peculiar weight of responsibility lies upon those individuals, who are endowed with high conversational talents; who can, with ease and acceptance, turn the course of speech into whatever channel they please. Let them especially aim at the glory of God, and the good of mankind when they enter into company. Let their authority repress every thing improper and pernicious; and their fascinating powers give a tone of sobriety and good sense, and, if possible, of christian piety, to every conversation in which they bear a part. By the way, let it be added, that a christian should very seldom be found in any circle, from which the sublime doctrines of our salvation are systematically excluded.

I may be told, that so many rules about conversation, tend to check that ease which is its principal charm. The objection is plausible, but admits of a ready and complete answer. It is by a careful attention to good rules, that we form the habit of doing any thing with grace and facility. In this way men are trained to reading, to writing, to eloquence itself in its loftiest exertions; so that the rules come to be no longer embarrassing, as being no longer a necessary accompaniment of the process. I certainly wish conversation to flow with ease, as well as propriety. But this must be the

fruit of a mind rightly disciplined and informed ; and of a heart subjected to the fear of God, and expanded with universal benevolence.

MELANCTHON.

THE HISTORY OF ADEN.

CONTENTMENT AND PIETY ESSENTIAL TO HAPPINESS.

AN ALLEGORY.

On the eastern verge of the City of Mecca, near the holy well of Zemzem, stood the dwelling of Merab. He was fam'd for the hospitality of his board ; and he did not waste in frivolous superfluity that portion of his abundance, which would satisfy the wants of the poor and maimed who gathered in his avenues. He was one of the wealthiest of his countrymen, and was known to inherit the spirit and munificence of a Koreishite. His camels, as they journeyed in the caravans of Mecca, were distinguished by the richness of their trappings, and the compactness of their costly burdens—His storehouses were filled with the treasures of Africa, and the spices of India ; with the grapes of Tayeff, and the fruits of Sana. The fame of his knowledge was commensurate with that of his wealth. Great learning had assisted the penetration of his judgment, by nature strong and sound, and the benevolence of his heart made him delight in that science, whose end is the happiness of mankind—Merab was now old, and the evening of his life was serene and mild—The opening virtues of his son Aden, shed happiness and lustre round the decline of Merab. He found his cares repaid, and his labors rewarded. His talents were not uselessly devoted to the formation of the mind of Aden ; and his knowledge was not thrown away in his instruction—Merab delighted to follow the fervid fancy of his son, which he guided and chastened by the maxims of his sounder judgment—He listened to his youthful remarks with lively anticipations—Thus in peace and in hope set the sun of Merab ; and Aden consigned, with filial sorrow, the spirit of his father to the promises of the Prophet.

When the poignancy of his grief had been blunted by time, and had subsided into tender regrets and soothing recollections ; the mind of Aden was again bright, and he felt his usual health returning—His prospects lengthened before him, and his mind expanded with them. Curiosity and a thirst of knowledge fired his breast ; and to visit foreign climes, became

a subject of expectation and promise of delight. He accordingly set forward on his travels with a mind vigorous from study, and animated by hope. The freshness of youth was on his countenance, and its innocence in his breast. He surveyed the verdure of nature, and the glow of the season resembled the animation of his soul. He determined to visit the ports of the Red Sea and of the Euphrates—Already had he learned that arts and sciences were wafted from afar, on the wings of commerce—He knew that to it he owed the blessings of his lot—He knew that to it Merab had been indebted for his wealth and knowledge, and that to its streams, more fertilizing than those of the Ganges or Nile, were attributable the fame, the wealth, and the learning of Arabia—It had inspirited the enterprises, and expanded the views of the Koreishites of Mecca; and hence “the noblest of her sons had united the love of arms to the professions of merchandize.”* In those cities he expected to see much of mankind; to learn much of foreign countries; and to converse with the wise, who were in search of the learning and curiosities of the East.—He was not disappointed—He saw much, learned much. His journey through the cities of Arabia was delightful and instructive—He listened with attention to the wise: To the moral sage, the loftiest pillar of real science, he listened with seriousness, but yet with doubt: To the natural Philosopher, with all the delight with which a lover of nature explores her secrets, and learns her beauties: To those who spoke of the fame of viziers and ministers of state, he listened with enthusiasm. His mind expanded, and his soul was elevated when he heard of the fame, the knowledge, and virtues of Omar, the prime Vizier of the Calif of Egypt—But his heart was troubled, when it was related to him, that Omar had been stript of power, which he had used for the welfare of his country; and had experienced the ingratitude, which alas! so often falls on the greatest and best of men. Here ambition first sprung in the mind of Aden; and forgetting the conclusion of the life of Omar, he thirsted for his power and fame. He resolved to continue his travels in the East, and to consult the Mandarins of India. He read with care the works of Lawgivers, and treasured the maxims of Confucius.—He became enamored of the principles of that Philosopher, and felt a desire to gain place and power, that he might put in practice his maxims of political duty.—After having journeyed in the East, he resolved to return into Arabia. There he expected his knowledge would distinguish him; and that he would find the lasting gratification of his mind in the elevation of his

* Gibbon.

person. Aden arrived in the land of his birth, and rested for a while in the dwellings of his ancestors. It was not long, ere his genius, erudition and eloquence, gained him pre-eminence.—His house was crowded with visitors, who came to listen, and who departed in admiration. Aden's hopes were realised ; and his views rose with his reputation. He resolved to offer his services to a Prince, and presented himself to Iman, Prince of Moskat. The fame of Aden had reached the prince. Royalty felt ennobled by the proximity of genius ; and Aden was appointed Minister of State.—He studied the character of the people, over whom he exercised authority. To him the Prince left the reins and cares of government ; and Aden meant to put in practice, the results of his observations and learning. He encouraged Agriculture ; and by wise regulations, fostered and extended commerce. His active mind, searched out the causes of existing evils and his genius supplied the remedies.—He repressed the tyranny of the courtiers of the Divan, and gave confidence and spirit to the people. The dignity of his manner silenced the flattery of Sycophants ; and the voice of false adulation faltered in his presence—injured innocence bowed before him with hope and confidence ; while guilt trembled at the sternness of his justice—His ambition still kept pace with the success of his measures ; and the charms and splendors of power, became too great for the strength of his philosophy—His views were too comprehensive for the mind of the Prince ; and the daring of his enterprize, confounded his conception. He grasped at too much, and forgetting the situation of minister, he forgot the pre-eminence of the Prince. The Prince became jealous of his reputation, and felt uneasy at his elevation. The courtiers, whom the presence of Aden had restrained, who had long envied his power, began to foment the jealousies of Iman ; and intrigue and falsehood were busied for his destruction—Aden too late discerned the storm which had gathered, and in vain endeavored to avert its rage, and ward off its “ pitiless peltings.”—He felt himself the object of distrust ; and his presence was avoided, even by those who had been most active in his service, and ardent in his praise. He saw his danger, but the energy of his mind was proof against fear.—

“ Painful pre-eminence, himself to view

Above life's weakness and its pleasures too.”

At length Aden was dismissed from the service of the Prince, and persecution followed him beyond the threshold of the

court of Moskat. He was forced to fly from the City, and he returned to Mecca forlorn and wretched. But the elasticity of his mind raised his spirit, and opened other plans to his view—He determined to acquire extensive reputation as a philosopher and sage. He assiduously sought for books on all sciences, and added them to his library. He studied without intermission; and consumed the midnight lamp in profound research, and anxious enquiry—His spacious apartments were thrown open; and the learned of all countries were invited to them. The abstruse questions often proposed, furnished an opportunity for the display of his learning and eloquence. He became renowned in Mecca; and the fame of Aden was heard throughout Arabia. The wise men of the East pressed into his presence, and listened with attention—The voice of flattery was soon pleasing to him; for it spoke of his genius, and extolled his acquirements—But Aden was not satisfied—He felt chagrined at the idea, that though his learning was extensive, it was limited by the discoveries of others. He unwisely determined to leave the track of sober reason and observation, and to dive into hidden causes—He followed the flights of a vigorous imagination, and was delighted at the persuasion that he could arrive at truth, through fine-spun theory, and ideal paradox. He despised the doctrines of the Prophet; and endeavored to fathom the depths of divine agency, and moral cause. He attempted by the light of reason alone, to explain seeming contradictions; and to reduce to the level of unassisted comprehension, the whole range of moral existence. Blindly and sceptically presumptuous, he undertook to explain the cause why

——— “Unassuming worth in secret liv’d
And died neglected—why the good man’s share
Was gall and bitterness of soul.
——— Why heaven-born truth
And moderation fair, wore the red marks
Of superstition’s scourge.”

His theories were ingenious, and his disciples were delighted by their novelty; and without the trouble of reflection, thought themselves enlightened by the rays of truth. The fame of Aden increased; and flattery was redoubled. But alas! the mind of Aden was not at rest—Whilst he believed he had convinced others, he felt that his private reflection denied the conclusions of his theories—The clouds of scepticism, and the uncertainties of doubt, darkened his mental vision—He became restless and gloomy; and the flattery of his followers ceased to beguile him. The crowd wondered at the

contraction of his brow, and could not understand why he who *was wise, should not be happy*. Aden suddenly left Mecca, and determined once more to journey again through the East. He accordingly set forward—The solitude of his way was favorable to thought, and congenial to the train of his reflections. He continued to puzzle himself, and to wander in the mazes of error. The heat of the sun at length became oppressive, and he left the beaten tract, to pursue his way through the shades of the desert. While immersed in thought, his camel suddenly stopped, and Aden looking up, beheld an aged man leaning on his staff: the frosts of age were on his head, and the openness of his countenance announced the benevolence of his heart; while the steady serenity of his brow indicated thought, piety, and peace. Aden was struck at the appearance of the venerable man—He viewed him for some moments, and the agitations of his mind seemed to subside—He approached, and accosted the stranger with awe and reverence: “Father, thy appearance bespeaks thy wisdom; and contentment seems the inmate of thy bosom.” A smile passed over the features of the hermit, and holding forth his hand, he invited the confidence of the rambler. Aden alighted, and seated himself on a turf, to which the hermit pointed—They conversed on various topics, and Aden at length related the incidents of his life; and by degrees, unfolded the causes of his inquietude—The venerable man listened to him with attention and interest, and after musing in deep contemplation, thus spoke: “My son, the incidents of thy life have been few, but instructive; thou art too wise not to profit by the instruction they convey. Thy course was commenced in virtuous emulation, and the brightness of hope beamed on thy path—The spirit of enterprize was attended with the vigor of youth, and thy aspirings were lofty and honorable. Thy thirst for knowledge was the promise of usefulness and renown. Thou wert at first guided by prudence, and in the extent of thy acquirements thou mightest have reposed with gratification and delight—but thy ambition prompted thee to the acquisition of power—Success inspired confidence; and thy ardor outstript the dictates of prudence. Hadst thou, my son, been content with the power thou hadst attained, the subjects of Iman would still have been blest by thy wisdom—But alas! my son, contentment was a stranger to thy bosom—A want of it robbed thee of thy prudence, and left thee open to the attacks of envy, and to the intrigues of ambition. Thou hast acknowledged that thy peace of mind did not increase with thy power—know then, my son, that happiness is not the attendant of power or

ambition—that it is secured in proportion as we appreciate the circumstances which really bestow it—I have learned by experience, the truth, that contentment is one great source of happiness; the safeguard of virtue; and the security of its blessings. These truths, the events of thy early life have proved; for thou wast unhappy in the palaces of Moskat. Intrigue robbed thee of power; and thou hast experienced persecution and ingratitude—Thy disappointments were sore, and thou soughtest alleviation in the delights of science—In it, indeed, are innumerable and undescribable pleasures—but to realize them, the mind must be more intent on *truth* than ingenuity of theory, or intricacy of deduction. Be assured, my son, they deceive themselves and others, who attempt to unriddle the secrets of nature, and to explain moral causes by the light of natural reason. The experience of each day shews more forcibly the error of those who, to gratify a vain curiosity, or to indulge the pride of reason, discard the certainty of experiment, and the force of demonstration—who wander in the mazes of sophistry, imagining they have dispelled the clouds of ignorance, and are illuminated by the sun of truth; who imagine they can account for every phenomenon by learned phrases and incomprehensible hypothesis: Hence, my son, the origin of scepticism—Thou wast not contented with the deductions of sober reason, or the truths which thou ascertainedst by accurate research and patient investigation. Thou desiredst to be famed for discovery and invention; and thy mind became doubtful, when thy judgment detected the sophistry of thy reasoning—Apparent inconsistencies in the moral creation, seemed inexplicable to a mind determined not to believe what it could not account for, by its own exertions; or explain to the satisfaction of sceptical incredulity—To thee, who hadst heard of the doctrines of the Prophet, but withheld from them thy credence, it was unaccountable, because it *seemed* unjust, that virtue should suffer while vice triumphed—Thy view was bounded by present existence; and the punishment of the latter, and the reward of the other, could never happen; because, thou hadst not contemplated the bar, at which they were to be awarded. Thou didst not reflect, that the present afflictions of virtue, prepared it for future enjoyment; and that the present prosperity of vice, only sharpened the sting of its certain punishment.—Believe me, that *real* science, could never have led thee to the conclusions which have produced the scepticism that disturbs the serenity of thy mind—Pursue my Son, the paths of science, with *piety* thy guide—Be content with that which strengthens thy virtue, and secures thy happiness; all else is

error, which though it may gratify our pride, satisfies not our unprejudiced reason.—Thus will doubt vanish ; and in the rays of science, and in the emotions of piety, thy happiness will increase :”—“The hermit ceased, and Aden felt that the mists of error were passing away before the light of his philosophy—“Father, said he, thy wisdom has corrected the errors, and made straight the deviations of the wanderer—Thou hast restored to me a peace, I have long lost and sought in vain.”—Aden left the venerable man, with emotions of profound respect and gratitude.—He returned to Mecca, and his countrymen long enjoyed the benefits of his useful and extensive learning—He passed a life of contentment, and his piety was as great as his knowledge—His Tomb is still visited by the traveller and pilgrim, who acknowledge the truth, while they read the inscription upon it, “Contentment and piety are essential to Happiness.”—These are the words, which by his order, are inscribed on the tomb of Aden, the minister of Iman, and the philosopher of Mecca.

L.

Staunton, March 20th, 1818.

THE EFFICACY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, ILLUSTRATED
BY THE EXPERIENCE OF A POOR CRIPPLE.

[The diffusion of the Bible, throughout the world, is now the favorite object of protestant christians. Many, however, have not yet felt an interest in this work of love, and some oppose it with all their might. Among us the sin of *indifference*, not of resistance, is that which we have to deplore. As an admonition to those, who have done nothing, and are determined to do nothing ; and for the encouragement of the active and zealous friends of the Bible Society, we have determined to republish from the London Evangelical Magazine, the following very interesting narrative. It is in the words of a pious minister of the gospel, who himself saw the subject of the narrative, and conversed with him. We are sure that our readers will peruse the story with deep interest, and rejoice in this very striking illustration of the efficacy of the scriptures.]

‘ Having preached occasionally in the village of Overton, (in Hampshire) I was informed of a poor cripple who lived there, of the name of *William Chnrchman*, remarkable for his knowledge of the Scriptures, who did not appear to have read any book but the Bible, nor conversed with religious people of any denomination, nor to have attended any public worship. My curiosity was much excited by this account, and I formed an instant determination to visit him on the

evening of the following Sabbath. As I approached his cottage, its exterior gave me at once an idea of the wretched poverty of the inhabitant; the roof decayed; the windows, of which there are two, with scarcely one unbroken pane, were stopped with straw, hay, and many coloured rags. The shattered door was open. On entering, I beheld, seated on a little stool, (which with a broken chair and an old oaken table, composed the whole furniture of this miserable hovel) an object, whose appearance was expressive of greater wretchedness than even that of the habitation itself. His countenance appeared to be that of a man about 30 years old, pale and squalid; his head of an immoderate size, formed a shocking contrast to his withered limbs, which were not larger than those of a child of ten years old; distorted and deformed by several curvatures, both in the legs and spine. He was reading when I went in: and designing to conceal my errand, I accosted him with a very careless air, 'William, how do you do? What book is that you are reading?' He raised his head to look at me, and replied with a look and tone of seriousness and affection, which instantly removed all those unpleasant sensations his appearance had excited, 'The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' 'Ha!' said I, 'I have heard you religious people say, that a great deal of good may be got from that book, perhaps you can tell me if it be so; for I am sure I am bad enough, and if it will make me better, I'll read it too.'

He replied very gravely, 'If the same Spirit who moved holy men of old to write it, open your heart to understand it, then it *will* do you good; but not else; for 'the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.'

'But,' rejoined I, still affecting ignorance of his meaning, 'How came you to understand them? Surely you cannot be a learned man?'

Eyeing me with a solemn and piercing attention, he said, 'Sir, I don't know you, nor do I know why you came here; but this I know, that I am commanded by this book, to be ready to give to every man that asketh, a reason of the hope that is in me; and I pray God, that I may be enabled to do it with meekness and fear: you see, Sir, what a cripple I am, but you do not know what a sinner I am.'

'You a sinner,' exclaimed I, 'how can that be? you are not able to get about to drink, game, dance and carouse as the rest of us can; how then, in the name of wonder, is it possible that you should be a sinner?'

‘True,’ said he, ‘I could not ; but yet I am one of the vilest of sinners, for I believe no son of Adam ever sinned in the way I have done ; for I thought because God Almighty had made me such a poor lame cripple, and punished me so much, I supposed for nothing, that therefore I might take the liberty to sin without fear ; for I thought he would never be so hard as to punish me here and hereafter too : so that because that was the sin I could most easily indulge, I delighted to curse and swear ; and I am sure I made such new oaths and curses, that even if you have been used to swear yourself, they would make you tremble to hear them. However, blessed be God, who, during a sickness, awakened me in the prospect of death, and made me miserable,’ (for he then knew no other way to heaven than by his own works.)

‘Dear me,’ interrupted I, ‘what other way can there be than doing all the good we can, in order to gain the favour of God Almighty ?’

He answered, ‘By the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified, for by the law is the knowledge of sin : not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.’—‘But,’ continued he, ‘in this distress I tried to pray, but of all the prayers you ever read or heard, I believe you never heard any thing like it. I said, ‘Lord, I am a poor sinner that never did any good in my life, and now I am afraid I must die and go to hell ; but, O Lord, if thou canst save me, pray do, though I do not know how it can be. O try me once more, and I will be better than David : he prayed seven times a day, but I will pray eight times, and read twelve chapters.’ But by praying, I only meant reading eight Collects out of my mother’s Prayer Book.’

‘Well,’ interrupted I again, ‘what can be better praying than reading those excellent collects ?’

‘Ah Sir,’ said he, very earnestly, ‘you might read all the prayers over that ever were made by man ; you might make very good prayers ; or if you were a bishop, or some such great man, you might make prayers for other people, and yet never pray yourself in your life.’

‘Well,’ said I, ‘this is very strange ; what is praying then ?’

He replied, ‘Praying is telling the great God what we *feel* that we want of him.’

Returning to his story, he said, he got something better, and set about his task, but soon found he did not pray. ‘But, blessed be God,’ said he, ‘although I left off performing my task, he did not suffer me to leave off reading the Testament ; though the more I read the worse I was, for I read it all

through, and all seemed to condemn me. Now I can see in it exceeding great and precious promises, but I could not see any of them then; I could only attend to such awful words as these: 'Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.' Yet I began to read the Testament over again, and when I came the second time to the blessed first chapter of the first epistle of John, and read these precious words, 'The blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin,' I felt that precious blood relieve my wounded conscience, and I seemed to myself as if I was in a new world. I could *now* repent; I could believe; I could love God; and if I had had a thousand lives, I could have laid them all down for Christ.'

'These are wonderful things,' said I, 'that you tell me; but what was the reason why God shewed them to you? was it because you were so earnest in reading the Testament?'

He replied, with inexpressible energy, 'Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his purpose, and grace given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.'

'What,' exclaimed I, 'can you make me believe, that the great God ever thought any thing about such a poor insignificant crippled man as you are, before he made the world?'

'Yes,' said he, 'else why is it said, 'chosen in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love.'

'Surely,' said I, 'you have never sinned since that time?'

He replied, 'in many things we offend all: if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.'

'But,' said I, 'if you should sin so much as to go to hell after all this, you had better have remained as ignorant as I am?'

He replied, 'Being confident that he who hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. Who himself bare our sins in his own body on the tree.'

'Do I understand you rightly; that it does not signify what sins you commit, or how you live, now Christ is become your Saviour?'

He replied, with a loud accent of animated and holy indignation, 'God forbid! how shall we who are dead to sin, live any longer therein? for the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were

all dead : and that he died for all, that they which live, should not any longer live unto themselves, but to him that died for them and rose again.'

Looking at me while he was thus speaking, he saw a rising tear which I could no longer suppress, and instantly cried out, 'I am sure, Sir, you are not what you seem : I adjure you to tell me what you are, and why you came to see me?'

'My dear Christian brother,' said I, 'it is true as you say, I am not what I seem ; I am a poor sinner, who, like you, have been led by the Holy Spirit to trust in that Jesus who died for the ungodly.'

After a short pause, he said, 'I have heard one of the neighbors say, there is a strange kind of a man who comes sometimes to David Trueman's house, and that folks call him a *metridate*, or some such name ; are not you the man?'

'Yes, my dear friend, I am the man. I have just been telling your poor neighbors, that the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.'

Never shall I forget his look or his action : rising hastily from his seat, and grasping one of my hands in both of his, he instantly dropped on his knees, and lifting up his eyes, beaming with ecstasy, he cried aloud—'O my God, I thank thee, thou hast not only answered but exceeded my request : I prayed that I might see and converse with one of thy people before I died, and lo, thou hast sent me one of the ministers of Jesus. And now, my dear Sir,' added he, 'you must tell what you said to the people on that sweet verse, for I never heard a gospel sermon in my life.' I complied.

When I had ended, 'You know not,' said he, 'how you came to preach at Overton, but I can tell you. Ever since I became new-born, I have daily prayed to my heavenly Father, that if there was any minister of Christ in England, which I thought there must be somewhere, because the Bible was here, he would send one to teach my poor blind neighbors, and he has sent you ; and I doubt not but God will make you useful to them.'

I was desirous of knowing, whether he had, from searching the Scripture, obtained any distinct views of the nature of Christ's kingdom on earth ; and whether, as he conceived himself at a remote distance from any of Christ's disciples, he had turned his attention to the order and government of his church. To my enquiries I received with surprise the answers which follow :

'How many churches do you apprehend God may have in the world?'

- ‘One only,’ was his reply.
- ‘What church is that?’
- ‘The general assembly and church of the first-born, which is written in heaven.’
- ‘What then was the church of the Jews?’
- ‘The shadow of good things to come, but the body is of Christ.’
- ‘How are these visible to the world?’
- ‘By their fruits ye shall know them.’
- ‘Yes, as individuals, but how shall they be visible as a church?’
- ‘Where but two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.’
- ‘That may be in many places at once, but are they not called churches, why is this?’
- ‘Because each is like the whole church, as Paul says, ‘In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.’
- ‘How do any unite with such a church?’
- ‘They first give themselves to the Lord, and to us according to the will of God.’
- ‘What officers are there in the church of Christ?’
- ‘Bishops and deacons.’
- ‘What is the office of a bishop?’
- ‘To feed the flock of God, over which the Holy Ghost hath made him overseer.’
- ‘What is the deacon’s office?’
- ‘To serve tables.’
- ‘Were those officers appointed for enriching, or advancing the persons holding them?’
- ‘Ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. Not for filthy lucre’s sake; not as lord’s over God’s heritage, but as helpers of your joy.’
- ‘Who are to act in choosing those officers?’
- ‘Wherefore look out from among yourselves, seven men of good report, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, whom we may appoint over this business.’
- ‘But if wicked men creep into the church, how are they to be dealt with when they are discovered?’
- ‘Put away from among yourselves that wicked person.’
- ‘But if they repent afterwards?’
- ‘What shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?’
- ‘Does the power of kings and rulers relate to our bodies, or our consciences?’
- ‘Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s; but unto God the things that are God’s.’

I was surprised at his ideas on this subject, and could ask him no more questions.

This extraordinary man is since dead. Let us learn from this account of him, how indispensably necessary is the teaching of the Holy Spirit, for a right and saving knowledge of the Scriptures ; and may we never open the sacred volume, without lifting up the heart in prayer for divine teaching.—
‘ Lord, open thou my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law !’

BRAINERD.

SHORT DISCOURSES FOR FAMILIES.

No. VI.

2 TIMOTHY III. 15.

“ And that from a child, thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto Salvation.

The pious ancestors of Timothy, did not consider it dangerous to put the Bible into his hands, even in his childhood. They were not apprehensive that any bad consequence could result, from storing his mind with divine knowledge, as soon as he became capable of understanding the most obvious and simple truths, contained in the oracles of God. Lois, the grandmother of Timothy, was a believer. Her instructions and pious example had, doubtless, been blessed to her daughter Eunice, who was a believer also. Descended from a parentage so illustrious, Timothy is found acting a part, which their instructions, their prayers, and their expectation of the blessing of God on their efforts, might have led them to anticipate. If these pious women, lived to witness the zealous and affectionate labours of their pupil, in the vineyard of the Lord ; or to hear of his fame in the churches, they were amply remunerated, for all the pains, which they had taken in his education.

Our object in the remarks about to be offered on this passage, is, to induce parents to train up their children in the knowledge of the holy scriptures.

And certainly Parents ! to you this cannot be an uninteresting subject. You extend your views into future life, and with much solicitude ask, what will the character and condition of our children be, when our heads shall have been laid low in the dust ? Nay, your enquiries reach far beyond the momentary scenes and trivial interests of the present world, to the

transactions of the great day, and the unalterable condition of your children in the world to come. How devoutly have you often wished, that amidst the assembled saints, you may be permitted to exclaim, “Lord here are we, and the children whom thou gavest us!”

That this hope may be realized, a course of religious instruction must be commenced *early*.—Man, at the time of his first entrance on the stage of life, is not prepared to act his part. He is not furnished with a stock of innate ideas, to qualify him for entering, immediately, on the business which he may be destined to perform, as a moral agent; nor is he, like inferior animals, directed by instinctive wisdom, what to choose, and what to avoid. He has every thing to learn. The imbecility of his animal frame, demands all the fond care of a mother, to preserve and cherish it; and many tedious days must pass, before the first exhibition of intellectual power. That period, so interesting to a parent, at length arrives. The thinking faculty begins to be manifestly exerted. Questions are proposed, respecting the nature of surrounding objects; the Creator of all things; and the purposes for which they were made; which afford an opportunity of communicating important information respecting the character of *him*, who made and upholds the universe by the word of his power; and the manner in which that power was employed to bring into existence all the objects of sense. Let the first impressions made on the hearts of children, be the effect of some interesting views of the greatness, the wisdom, or the goodness of God. Let them know, that the innumerable blessings, which they constantly receive, all flow from his bounty: and that they have encouragement from his word, to approach him as their Father who is in Heaven; that they may receive the blessings which he freely bestows on his children. Suffer them not, ignorantly to transgress the rules of action, contained in the holy scriptures; but whether in the house or by the way, converse with them respecting the divine precepts, and the sanctions by which they are enforced. Apprise them of their accountability to God; of his omnipresence; and of his perfect knowledge of all their actions, and all their thoughts. Adopt a plan, for communicating the knowledge of the scriptures, which may be the most likely to excite a lively interest, in the mind of the pupil.

In studying the volume of nature, we meet with the *useful* and the *pleasant*, in every page: and certainly in unfolding the sacred volume, we need never be at a loss to intermingle instruction with delight. The boundless field here spread before us, will furnish a rich variety, whether our object

be, to inform the judgment, regale the fancy, or mend the heart.

Where shall we find an account of facts so interesting as the history, given in the Bible, of the creation of the world—of the fall of man—of the promulgation of the law—of Joseph and his brethren? But it would be in vain, to attempt an enumeration of all the particulars, calculated to excite a lively interest in the minds of both young and old, and to afford pleasure as well as edification.

The advantage to be expected, from enforcing instruction by example, is known to every person; and in the sacred writings, we are abundantly furnished, with faithful exhibitions of human character under every modification of virtue and vice.

Do you wish to excite in the mind of your child, a lively abhorrence of the crime of *treachery* or avarice? Let him read the history of the life and death of Judas. Is he of an irascible temper? Impress on his mind every particular recorded, respecting the first murderer Cain; and contrast with this the conduct of Joseph towards his brethren. Do you wish that he may be preserved from hardness of heart; inclined to sympathize with suffering humanity, and disposed to employ his hand or his purse, for the relief of the afflicted? Make him acquainted with the good Samaritan: if this expedient fail, tell him of *him* “who, though he was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich. Let him see Jesus weeping over the devoted city of Jerusalem; and hear his pathetick lamentation “O Jerusalem Jerusalem! thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not.” It is unnecessary to dwell on particulars of this nature; as it will be readily perceived, that in inculcating the lessons of heavenly wisdom on the minds of children, parents may easily avoid the dulness of repetition, and vary their subjects in such a manner, as to be heard with pleasure by all who possess a common share of sensibility. The word of God, was not intended merely to instruct the learned and the wise: while they may make daily additions to their knowledge, by opening their ear to the lessons of inspiration; “babes and sucklings,” nurtured by the sincere milk of the word, may grow up to the stature of men—may become wise to salvation.

Why should it be thought, that the truths connected with salvation, are the last that ought to be inculcated on the minds of youth? Certainly many appear to act under the influence

of such a notion. To qualify their children for maintaining an intercourse with their fellow-men, and for acting their part with credit, in the station they may be called to occupy ; they, for the most part, begin early enough. Lessons on the subject of *manners* ; and maxims to be regarded in society, are repeated with a persevering assiduity, that may well lead their pupils to suppose, that, provided they can appear well here, it matters little what may come hereafter.

Now, can it be maintained that a child, who is capable of understanding instructions respecting his intercourse with men, is too young to comprehend the first principles of christian knowledge, or to be informed of the relation he bears to his Creator and Redeemer, and of his correspondent obligations ?

If by introducing our children *early* to an acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, we can safely promise ourselves greater success than we could hope for at any later period, this circumstance alone ought to preclude all delay. A knowledge of the scriptures is the appointed means of salvation from sinful propensities. “ Sanctify them through the truth ; thy word is truth.” Now is it not a fact, that with the first indication that they are possessed of rational powers, children exhibit sad evidence of evil tempers ? Is not that, which is frequently hailed by the fond parent, as indicative of *smartness* in his child, rather calculated to confirm in the judgment of an unbiassed mind, the doctrine of early depravity, than to warrant an expectation, that the *darling* will surpass other children, in the exhibition of uncommon talents ? Now, the question is, shall the means of eradicating the evils of the heart, be employed as soon as as these evils are exhibited, or shall we delay for a more auspicious season ? These sinful tempers do not, like noxious weeds, speedily attain their growth, arrive to maturity, and then decay—“ they grow with our children’s growth, and strengthen with their strength.”— Shall we then attempt to bend the *twig* ; or wait, in hopes of bending the *tree* with less difficulty ? Can a doubt exist in the mind of any parent, respecting the course to be pursued, whilst he observes the daily increase of evil passions in the mind of his child, and the domineering influence of bad habits ? In proportion to the time permitted to pass away, before the proper corrections are applied to those evils, the evils themselves not only become more deeply rooted, and more difficult to eradicate ; but the facility of applying the remedy is proportionably diminished. As the disease advances, the medicine becomes nauseous and disgusting. Such progress in depravity, and in opposition to the means of grace, you

may have often seen exemplified. How many unhappy youths, before reaching the meridian of life, have become abandoned in practice, and corrupt in principle? Unless the restraints of religion are early imposed, and applied with persevering assiduity, there is nothing to be found in sinful man, on which to found a hope that he will be correct in heart or life.

Were human nature less depraved than, both from Revelation and experience, it is found to be, it would be extremely hazardous to expose a youth, without experience, suspicion, or caution, to all the seductive arts that might be practised on him by designing men. But if the heart be deceitful, and desperately wicked; if selfish, envious, malignant passions be the governing principles in the minds of a vast number, with whom a daily intercourse must be maintained; if there be corrupters of youth, instigated by the prince of darkness, to aid him in tempting and ruining mankind; then we may well ask "How shall a young man cleanse his way?" how shall he maintain a fair character, the offspring of sound principles; without much more than a superficial acquaintance with the holy scriptures? Certainly some powerful cause must be brought early into operation, and made to bear on the mind with continual and unabating force, to ensure a course of action, opposed both by the world, and by the heart of the individual. A thorough acquaintance with the Bible, is to be relied on as the means of correcting the disorders of the heart, and of preserving youth from the seductive schemes of their worst enemies; and securing that docility which readily yields to the impressions of the word of God.

But remember, that to be successful in your efforts to train up your children in the knowledge of the scriptures, you must keep them out of the way of those "evil communications which corrupt good manners." Let a heathen admonish you to "let nothing unfit to be seen or heard, enter the apartment that contains your child." What good effect can parents expect to follow from an occasional admonition, or a weekly sermon; if, what passes before their children at other times, is evil, only evil, and that continually? What hope can be entertained, respecting their future character, when every thing witnessed by them, that can have any influence in the formation of that character, is calculated to give them a permanent bias to evil; and to render them hostile to the religion of Christ—to its privileges not less than to its precepts? Who can tell the effect that may possibly be produced on the mind of a child, by witnessing one scene of successful villainy; or how much may be done by the occurrences of a single day, to give to life its permanent form and

colour? But should it be supposed that the quantity of evil accumulated in a given period, can be but small; and the effect on the character proportionably trivial; if the accumulation continue from early youth, through each successive period, what must be the aggregate amount in old age? It remains for the realities of the future world, to evince the infatuation of such as spend their days in “treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath;” yet how many appear to be engaged in this eager pursuit of destruction? In this land of *Bibles*, and religious freedom, what vast multitudes are assuming a character, as permanent as their existence, whilst, neither the holy scriptures, nor the Spirit that indited them, have any agency in this momentous result! Shall persons of this description be the chosen companions of your children? Will you suffer your sons and daughters to breathe the pestilential atmosphere, that surrounds their habitations? If you tolerate these things, you are not to think it strange, should your children become weary of the Sabbath—close their ears against religious instruction; and at last place themselves in the seat of the scorner. Let us hope for better things from you, and from your children—Let us hope, that whilst you adopt every means likely to bring them to the knowledge of the scriptures; you will preserve them with equal solicitude, from every thing having a tendency to diminish their reverential regard for the gospel and its institutions.

To facilitate the business of religious instruction, parents may avail themselves of the labors of the pious who have gone before them. Much has been written, on the various branches of christianity, from which they may derive personal aid in “working out their own salvation,” as well as in communicating instruction to their children. We would here particularly recommend the General Assembly’s shorter Catechism, as affording the most correct and comprehensive view of the system of doctrines taught in the holy scriptures, any where to be found within the same compass. Let this be accurately committed to memory, which may be done by children of ordinary capacity, in a short time. They will then carry with them an assistant, which will make it much more easy for them to bring what they hear advanced as scriptural, to the proper standard. And there will certainly be a greater probability, that they will derive advantage from the weekly instructions, on which they attend in the house of God, when prepared to go with the preacher through his discourse; to view the doctrines advanced in connection with other doctrines of the same system; and to discern the

connection between the several doctrines and the precepts of christianity ; than that a person shall receive that advantage who is not prepared by previous instruction to say, whether what he hears is true, or false. The talents of the speaker may produce a temporary effect on the feelings of such a hearer, but no permanent advantage can be expected. All impressions of this sort must be evanescent, that are not kept alive by an abiding impression of revealed truth.

To afford a reasonable expectation of success, in communicating religious instruction, the life of the instructor, must accord with his profession and his precepts. Parents must feel the saving influence of the scriptures on their own hearts, before they can reasonably expect so to recommend them to their children, that they shall become wise to salvation. If a child, in the lap of its mother, by fixing its eye on her countenance, will often ascertain, in spite of herself, whether she is offended or in good humour ; can it be supposed that a youth, who is capable of understanding the fundamental doctrines of religion, will make no enquiry respecting the effect of the instructions given to him, on the mind and practice of his instructors ? What effect would you expect, from the sermons of a preacher, whose life and doctrine were constantly at variance ? It is indeed possible for the supreme Being, through such an instrument, to speak to the conscience of a sinner, and bring him to repentance : but such an event we should not anticipate ; and why should we hope for the blessing of God on the instructions of an ungodly parent, rather than on the hypocritical labours of an ungodly preacher ?

With what face can a parent chasten his son for a violation of the third commandment, who is himself guilty of open and habitual profanity ? Or how can he flatter himself with an expectation, that his children will "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy," whilst they witness his disregard of this commandment, as often as the day of rest returns ? Physician ! heal thyself. Parents ! obey the truth. Never tempt your children to adopt the opinion, that you are solicitous to impose on them a burden, which you will not touch with a finger. Rather be solicitous for grace to enable you to address them in the language of the great Apostle. "Be ye followers of us, even as we are of Christ Jesus."

Let your children witness your daily perusal of the Bible ; let them hear your daily petitions, presented at the throne of grace, for that divine influence, which will dispose your hearts and theirs to relish the truth. Attempt not to conceal from them your humiliation—your self abasement and penitence, on the recollection of your daily offences : let them hear your

humble confessions, and understand the foundation on which your hope of pardon and acceptance rests.

Be solicitous, that every thing your children hear from you, or witness in your conduct, may happily accord with the purpose to "train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." While your life is prolonged, let it recommend the Bible to them ; and then, when called to die, you may commit them to the God of their fathers, and to the word of his grace ; with a cheering hope, that as they have known the holy scriptures from their childhood, they will find them, through life profitable for doctrine—for reproof—for correction—and for instruction in righteousness ; and in the end, be made wise to salvation.

TIMOTHEUS.

For the Virginia Evangelical and Literary Magazine.

IMPROVEMENT OF TIME.

On this subject, I am often charging myself with criminal negligence ; and ought to do it much more frequently, and more seriously than I do. If all the hours and minutes which I have suffered to pass, without improvement, for even one year, were added together, and the whole amount presented at one view, it ought to make a very lasting, and very useful impression on the mind. If this account of wasted time, were accompanied with a statement of the manner in which it might have been improved ; of the duties which might have been discharged ; of the knowledge that might have been acquired ; of the progress in holiness that might have been made ; of the good which might have been done, it could not fail to be still more impressive. Such an account, written out in full, would no doubt say—This hour, spent in conversing on the state of public affairs, might have been devoted to religious conversation—This one, though the conversation turned on religious subjects, might have been spent to much better purpose, by conversing with those who are ignorant, who need instruction, and who are ready to perish for lack of knowledge. This hour, spent in mere complimentary visits, might have been improved in visiting the sick and dying.—This one, while travelling alone, was wasted in idle reverie, by suffering incoherent thoughts which could answer no good purpose, to occupy the mind ; it might have been improved in serious and devout meditation, in looking at *those things which are not seen*, in looking unto Jesus. These thirty

minutes were wasted in sleep beyond the usual and necessary time, they might have been devoted to reading the Bible and to prayer.—These fifteen minutes, spent in anxious fears of future and uncertain evil, might have been spent in cherishing grateful emotions for blessings already received. These ten minutes were wasted by entertaining hard thoughts and groundless suspicions of your neighbor; they might have been improved in searching your own heart, and detecting its secret mischief and guile—These five minutes were spent in viewing some passing spectacle of no value; while means might have been devised for resisting your besetting sin.—This minute, while in company, you listened to the useless remark of some person present; you might have lifted up the soul in devout aspiration to God.

If to this were added the time spent in doing positive evil, the amount would be still more alarming and impressive. At this time an unguarded remark or word escaped from your lips, which excited some degree of anger, malice, envy or jealousy in the mind of your friend; which, if he is a pious man, it may occasion him much disquietude and trouble to suppress: and if he is not pious, by strengthening his native aversion to religion, it may render his conversion a little more difficult, and of course, a little more improbable—At this time you had a fair opportunity of recommending religion by a suitable deportment; instead of this, you injured the sacred cause by conduct which was calculated to efface the impressions of some, and render others better satisfied in their indifference—At this time, without a prompt and vigorous resistance, you admitted sinful thoughts to occupy your mind; these thoughts will often return in opposition to all the resistance you can make; will often disturb your secret devotion; will often be your tormentors in public worship.

If such an account, transcribed from those *books* which will be opened at the last day, was presented, at the end of the year, to each individual, it could scarcely fail to excite, at least, some transient alarms in the breast of the most thoughtless; and it would certainly be calculated to humble the christian in the dust, and excite in him that penitential sorrow which would induce him to be more watchful in future. Such an account will be presented at the close of life. Let us now, therefore, be diligent in *redeeming the time*, that we may give in our account with joy, and not with sorrow.

T. B.

Necessity of a better System of Instruction in Virginia.

No. IV.

I have attempted to shew the present system of education to be wholly inadequate to the purposes contemplated in every rational system of instruction. Three alternatives offer themselves. 1. To send our youth abroad. 2. To abandon instructing them. 3. To improve our institutions for their education. The second is not to be considered, because a controversy about instruction, with one denying the benefits of education, would be like a dispute with a blind man about colors. Sending our young men abroad is liable to weighty and conclusive objections. 1. They acquire habits wholly foreign to those of their country, and however learned, can never be happy or useful in it. 2. Much of the expense is wasted in transporting them. 3. It is to encourage in the most disadvantageous manner possible, the labor and skill of a foreign country, instead of those of Virginia. For the truth of the first observation I refer you to experience. Many very promising youths have gone north in search of learning. We will not stop to enquire how much they found there; but we know that all their previous habits, sentiments and opinions have been so discordant with those of the northern universities, that very many of them have been suspended, expelled, &c. They, I think, were the most fortunate; for the few who remained, became gradually reconciled to the change of condition; at last preferred it; and, after having made a tolerable proficiency in branches of learning, the least esteemed, and least useful at home, returned with foreign manners, habits, &c. to preach up for the edification of their parents and family, the miseries of slavery; to praise pumpkins and laugh at hominy; in short, to like every thing foreign, and hate every thing domestic.

But when we consider the number of young men who go abroad in search of educations we should look a little to the national expense of such a system. The mere hire of stages, travelling expenses, and loss of time in reaching Cambridge, Yale, Princeton, Philadelphia, &c. &c. amounts to many thousand dollars a year. I will venture to say that this sum alone, is the interest of a principal, large enough to establish a better university than any now existing in the United States. But that is by no means the chief expense. I was at some pains three years ago, to learn the number of Virginians at northern universities, (including the medical school at Philadelphia) as well as their expenses. The amount startled me.

It cannot possibly be estimated at less than between 2 and 300,000 dollars *per annum*, and I think it nearest the last sum. This then is the annual tax paid by Virginia to the northern states, with more certainty and less expense, than if the tax-gatherer of those states came to this our community, collecting it as revenue. Now the single sum which Virginia pays in one year to foreign states, judiciously expended, would establish a better university than any now existing in America: would save to the state all this tax; nay, would draw to it such a concourse of strangers, as would make Virginia that much richer instead of poorer. Persons who do not think, will ask why do not northern universities become enormously rich? The answer is obvious. Some of them do. But the whole of this sum by no means accrues to the professors. It is divided among teachers, boarding-houses, washing women, tailors, shoe-makers, book merchants, &c.: but whoever receives, it is no matter, since it is in one case lost to Virginia; and in the other would be saved to it. But look at Edinburgh and Gottingen in Europe. Cities which have literally grown into existence, nay into opulence and splendor, by the renown of their universities. Even putting political reasons and economical calculations out of the question, there is something so captivating in the distinction, that I wonder Virginia should be so insensible to it—nay I cannot believe that a generous and enthusiastic people can be insensible to the advantages of the very system which gave them an ascendancy, which they are every day taunted with having lost. Poor William and Mary has been the *alma mater* of many illustrious *alumni*—So long as it was eminent for the ability and ardor of its professors, it had votaries, and defenders, and pupils, whose glory reflected lustre upon its pretensions. It was there and not at Princeton, &c. that the genius of our state was formed and disciplined to the pursuit of every exalted object. Let us not then renounce and disgrace the origin and source of all that is dignified or animating in our past history. Let not us who boast of our Washingtons, our Jeffersons, our Monroes, our Randolphs, our Lees, our —, our —, cease to cherish learning which has fashioned these stars to our firmament.—Let us atone for our past neglect. Let us do something to save the honor of the state from its dependence on foreign universities—its resources from the prodigality and waste which is inseparable from that system; and its youth from the misery of an education at war with every circumstance which surrounds them.

Great diversity of opinion will naturally exist on the best means for accomplishing the proposed end. Some are for

teaching all classes the elements of knowledge, and others for teaching a few to be profoundly learned. And they are again subdivided as to the best method of performing their several plans. Some are for Primary schools, and some for Universities, and some for Colleges, and some for nothing at all. There is some reason in many of these schemes, but nothing profound in most of them. The plan of beginning with primary schools is liable to this objection. We have no teachers for them. Even if they were established, the professors would all come from the north; and instead of sending our youth to Massachusetts to school—Massachusetts would send men here to teach school. We should have Massachusetts notions, doctrines, prejudices, &c. &c. inculcated with less expense to be sure, and therefore in a preferable manner to the present. But should this satisfy our views? By no means. We must first raise men fit to be teachers, and whether the state make primary schools or not, *they will*. They will be capable of living by their talents, all the lucrative professions will be overstocked, and the superfluity of well educated men, will emigrate, teach school &c. A great university will draw to it exactly the men who now go north, with a loss of near 300,000 dollars *per annum* to Virginia. I wish to save this expense, to curtail this prodigality first. Many who cannot now go north from insufficient resources, will go to the university. Learned professorships will soon become objects of desire. Letters will, instead of being a reproach, confer an honorable distinction; and most of the evils we now labour under, will disappear.

It was not to be expected, that so many discordant interests and principles as will be brought into operation, in the selection of a spot for the scite of this grand seminary, could be easily reconciled. Local partialities, selfish calculations, and political prejudices, will all have their influence. But the matter has properly been referred to a tribunal, which it is hoped will consider only the permanent advantage to the state, without the least regard to any sectional and much less, any individual interests. We forbear giving any opinion on the proper situation; indeed we have formed none—but the circumstances which should chiefly be considered in the choice, appear to us to be 1. salubrity of climate. 2. The abundance and cheapness of every thing necessary for consumption; provisions, fuel &c. 3. Intelligence and refinement of the surrounding population. 4. Conveniency to the greatest actual number of persons to be educated. 5. Facility of access by water, as well as by land.

1. The healthiness of the climate is obviously so important

a quality, that it is unnecessary to enlarge on it. William and Mary has been constantly impeded by not possessing this advantage—As pupils from other states would be attracted to such an university, and indeed for the benefit of our own, I could not merely require exemption from epidemical disorders, but I would consider the pleasantness also of the climate. That which requires fires less frequently by a month in each year, should *ceteris paribus* be preferred. For fuel costs money, and money is worth saving: besides it would be a saving of time, of comfort and of health, as well as of money. 2. The cheapness of fuel, provision, &c. is a very important advantage; and one which should never be overlooked.—Our climate is subject to droughts. In dry years, provisions are dear every where. I would obviate this as far as possible, by placing the university in a country connected very extensively with the state, by facilities for internal transportation. 3. Scarcely any thing deserves more attention, than the nature of the population of the neighborhood. An university must have visitors or trustees. To attend, they must be neighbors. If they be ignorant, the university may be perverted into an instrument for perpetuating ignorance and vice. An university diffuses a taste for letters through a society fit to receive such impressions. If the society be dull, an university will excite only sentiments of hostility. 4. As it is to be for the accommodation of our own population, that accommodation should be as equally distributed as possible. 5. Facility of water communication is desirable, both for procuring provisions in dear years, from a distance—fuel centuries hence, &c.—also for the transportation of heavy articles imported from Europe—books, apparatus, &c. Whatever place these advantages may be thought most to conspire in, shall have the hearty approbation of the writer of these paragraphs. He has no family—no lands—no prospects of academic advancement. He hopes for no patronage—he dreads no power of the university. He has sought to do a service to his country, for which he expects neither honor nor emolument. And he will be satisfied, should these hints be regarded exactly according to their worth.

A PROVINCIAL PROTESTANT.

REFLECTIONS ON THE FOURTH JULY, 1818.

It is wise in our citizens to celebrate the return of this anniversary. On this subject, insensibility would be deplored by us as a calamity. Surely he has not the heart of a citizen,

who can recal the events associated with this day, without the most powerful emotions. The pretensions and assumptions of arbitrary power; the wealth, the skill, and the experience that were combined for our subjugation; the invasion of the country by mighty armies and great navies; the spirit of our fathers; the wisdom that planned, and the courage that executed measures of defence; the eloquence of patriotic orators rousing the people to just resistance; the enthusiasm enkindled through the nation; the cry "To Arms!" which rung from one end of the continent to the other; the noise of the battle; the shouts of victory; the achievement of independence; the return of peace; the various blessings of liberty diffused and multiplied through our country, and handed down to us by our forefathers—all these themes crowding on the mind, and taking possession of the heart, overpower us by their dignity, and importance; and we are conscious of emotions to which we are incapable of giving utterance; of conceptions, which we know not how adequately to express. We have a deeper sense of this insufficiency, when with a recollection of what is past, we attempt to look into futurity, and conjecture, for this is all that we can do, what destinies await our country. During the forty-two years that have passed, since the declaration of independence, the people of the United States have accomplished so much, and on the return of this hallowed day, they are in a state so flourishing and prosperous, that we seem warranted to entertain the most sanguine hopes for the time to come. A prospect so adorned with all that can delight the eye, and gladden the heart, was never before opened to any nation. A fairer promise of exalted purposes; of noble achievement, has never been made by any other people. We stand pledged to the world to make a full and fair experiment of republican institutions; and the eyes of many people are on us, to behold whether, according to our principles, a community can be wise, and great, and happy. Tyrants and their minions eye us with "jealous leer malign;" while the friends of man regard us with the deepest solicitude, anxious for the result. Interested as we are in all that concerns the land of our birth, and the institutions of our fathers, we cannot but partake of this solicitude; because we know, that our path lies through dangers, neither few nor small. In the faithful records of history we have witnessed the rise and fall of ancient republics. The glories of Athens, of Sparta, and Rome live only in the narrative of the historian, and the song of the poet. "*Fuit Ilium.*" And such may be the fate of this only republic in the world. Like a brilliant meteor, we may shine and be gazed at for a time, and then "vanish away."

These thoughts are not indulged, to interrupt the pleasures of the day ; but for the purpose of giving weight to the cautions and admonitions which appear, to us at least, needful and salutary. And here we will confess that the ordinary manner of celebrating the declaration of independence does not satisfy us. It never did. The reason is, because it does not seem to us adapted to form and strengthen the associations, and call forth the feelings best calculated to produce a happy effect. By possibility, military parade may suggest the idea that our freedom was secured by war ; and that, therefore, we must have

Hearts resolved, and hands prepared ;
The blessings that we hold to guard.

But we much doubt whether any thing of this nature is thought of by those who are engaged in these exercises ; and we fear that the *muster* is only regarded as a preparation for the dinner, that follows the parade ; and the drinking, that succeeds the dinner. Is there not some reason for the apprehension, that the young may consider this birth day of American Independence as an occasion, when ordinary restraints may be thrown aside, the maxims of temperance disregarded, and the most injurious indulgencies be allowed without reproach or remorse ? And is it not revolting to the best feelings of patriotism, to pervert this holy day into an occasion ; to use it as an opportunity of forming habits, highly destructive to the best interests of our country ; as well as to the best hopes of domestic life ? How did the patriots of *seventy-six* feel, when they published their declaration ? We may well suppose, that their minds were raised to the loftiest tone—that, when taking a measure pregnant with the fate of millions, their noblest faculties were tasked to the most vigorous exercise ; and that with the deepest solemnity, they made their appeal first to the Lord of hosts ; and then to the nations of the world. Their purposes were full of magnanimity ; their design, as noble as any that patriots ever conceived ; and their minds were dilated to the full measure of the undertaking.—Now, we would have the day so celebrated, as to recall their spirit ; to rouse in the bosoms of their children the same feelings ; and strain them up to the same degree of moral sublimity. Instead of intemperate feasting, and drunken huzzas, we could wish to observe such reference to the gracious providence of God, exercised towards our country, as to excite the fervour of pious gratitude ; and to hear such lessons of patriotic wisdom, as would teach the young the

duties, which they owe to their country, and rouse the intensest devotion of their hearts to its best interests. Here would be an auspicious season for the aged to exhibit the results of experience to ears opened to hear, and hearts softened to receive instruction. And we might return to our homes, to act, during the year, the part of better men and better citizens. We do think that he, who should devise a method of keeping this day with proper effect, would deserve a statue.

Disclaiming any arrogant pretensions; and assuming nothing but what belongs to every citizen, we would proceed humbly to offer our admonitory reflections. And here we would remark, that splendid victories by land and sea, do not constitute the chief glory of our country. It was much, indeed, to go through our revolutionary struggle, in opposition to a nation so great in skill and resources, as England. It was glorious, too, to meet in contest the mistress of the seas, and bring back the victory. But the discovery and practical recognition of the truth, that *Government is intended solely for the benefit of the PEOPLE*, constitutes a much higher claim on the admiration of the world. In other countries, the people, are the king's people; and the laws, the treasury, the army, the navy, all belong to the king. With us, the case is just the reverse; and no possession is acknowledged, except that which is allowed by the people. We grant what is enough for the support of those employed in our service; and admit of no hereditary claims. A few distinguished men had taught this doctrine in former times; but it was regarded as a mere philosophical speculation. The great held power for their own gratification; and the people submitted to their authority. The labour and the treasures of the nations, were employed in pampering the passions of their princes; and supporting wars instigated by lawless ambition, or by wounded female vanity. In this condition of the world, it was a great achievement for the people of this country so clearly to perceive this fundamental principle of their politics, as to resolve at every hazard to maintain it, and to reduce it fully and fairly into practice. This is not the place to enter fully into this subject—but we must remark, that the American principle, for so it may be denominated, is most extensive in its bearings, and powerful in its influences; it runs through all our institutions, and gives its shape and colouring to the whole course of our policy. Ultimately, then, the responsibility involved in all the mighty interests of this growing republic, rests on the people. This ought never to be forgotten; and the people ought to seek that information, to be ac-

tive in diffusing that knowledge, and diligent in forming and strengthening those habits of virtue, which will enable them to discern their true interests, and fit them for the discharge of the solemn and important duties incumbent on them. The necessity of a prompt and vigorous attention to this great subject, is most clearly shown by the simple statement of the great principle of our government. And if the people will not give to it their most serious attention, and task their united wisdom to devise and execute the best measures for carrying the benefits of sound learning to every family, and every individual in the nation ; our pledge will be unredeemed, our good name dishonoured, the labour of our fathers made void, and the best hopes of the world disappointed. This is the work of the people. Our legislatures will do nothing efficient, unless both stimulated and directed by their constituents. They seem afraid to move a finger, unless the way is pointed out ; or to appropriate a dollar, unless they are bidden. Any thing like apathy then on this subject is deeply to be deplored. It is unworthy of the spirit of our fathers, who, even under the pressure of revolutionary burdens, and amidst the turbulence of war, seemed to appreciate its worth ; and did what they could to promote sound learning. May their mantle rest on their children !

Another principle of great importance, which has been recognized by the people of this country, is the right of every man to pursue his own happiness, when, and where, and how he pleases. The only limitation known in our constitution and laws, respects the injury of others. No man has a right to hurt his neighbour, that he may benefit himself. In this case, as well as that just considered, the effect of *our principle* is great. It is the chief ingredient, in forming the character for enterprize and activity, by which our countrymen are distinguished. They are found in all regions—every breeze fills their sails ; every sea is vexed by their labours ; every surge tosses their vessels—All arts are sought by their industry ; and the powers of nature are made to subserve their purposes, and lend aid to their designs. Yet there is danger, lest in the abuse of this principle, injury be done to our national character. We may become a restless, unsettled, wandering people, without devotion to any but private interests ; without passion but for the acquisition of wealth. And here we must remark, that already the desire to be rich has risen to an extravagant and dangerous height. The slow and regular gains of patient industry are despised ; and rapid accumulation of property is sought in the way of bold and hazardous speculation. The success of a few, in acquiring

enormous wealth, has had a most disastrous influence on the many—so that now, it is difficult to find a man, content to follow a safe and steady business, that will make a comfortable living in a life time. We must be rich ; and that in a few years. Otherwise, we break up all old connections, and associations ; and, leaving the bones of our fathers, and the soil consecrated by their blood, we wander to new countries, and unexplored wildernesses, that we may find new fields for indulging the rage of speculation. These habits may result in the rapid formation of additional states in our confederation, but they are not favourable to the morals of the republic ; not suited to the genius of our institutions, not calculated to nourish the growth of that high-toned patriotism, which, on the fourth of July, '76, called forth the declaration of independence ; and which it ought to be the object of all to perpetuate.

While writing on this subject, we cannot forbear noticing another thing, in our view, highly injurious to the best interests of the country. Success in commercial pursuits, has generated habits of luxury in living, and extravagant expenditure in equipage and dress, entirely unsuitable to our pretensions, and the nature of our government. In the midst of this private profusion, this passion for wealth and high living ; there is growing on us a narrow and niggardly spirit in relation to public institutions, which we cannot but regard as an omen of evil. We speak not of the spirit with which our people meet the demands of government ; but of their feeling and conduct, in relation to means of moral and religious improvement, generally, at least, acknowledged to be important.—Without meaning to dwell on this subject, we would just remark in the way of illustration, that there is with a few exceptions principally in the towns, a very wide and striking difference between the places now erected for the worship of the living God, and those set up under the establishment. We feel deeply on this subject, because of our unreserved and entire devotion to the cause of religious liberty. Our researches into ecclesiastical history have convinced us, that the pure mantle of christianity is polluted whenever touched by worldly politicians ; and that this religion never does produce its proper effect, except when left to the unrestrained exertion of its moral influences on the heart. We gladly seize this opportunity of testifying that the *act for religious freedom* has our most cordial and hearty support ; and with our predecessors, we only grieve that a matter of this high importance, was not settled by the constitution, rather than by a repealable legislative enactment. These being our views, we are grieved to perceive that a love of gain, a spirit of profusion, and

a practical, if not avowed infidelity, have rendered our countrymen so indifferent to those measures, which, if not purely and strictly religious, are in a high degree important for the promotion of religion among the people.

These reflections are not unsuitable to the present time. It is to the influence of religion that we owe many, and those the most important, of the blessings which we enjoy ; and to the same source do we chiefly look for the preservation of all that is dearest to us as freemen. The gospel teaches us to call no *man* master. God made of *one blood* all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth. *High birth*, is antisciptural ; *divine right to authority*, when claimed by man, is impious. These are the lessons taught by our bible ; and we have received them—At the same time we are warned not to use our liberty for an occasion to the flesh ; but to restrain every passion that produces disorder ; to break off every habit incompatible with our own interest or that of others ; to govern ourselves ; to abstain from injury to others ; and in a word to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly before God. As patriots and christians, with all the associations of this day exerting their full influence on our minds, we wish, and we pray that the religion of the gospel, to all the extent of its power, may prevail among us.

Without intending any invidious insinuations or comparisons, we would make a solemn appeal this day to the brethren of our own denomination. We have had some occasion to enquire what were the sentiments of our fathers on the fourth of July '76. And we know that to a man, they bound themselves to all the extent of the pledge contained in the declaration of independence. Their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honour were devoted to the cause of their country ; and there is not an instance on record, or in the stories of tradition, of one among them proving recreant to the cause. Their pledge was redeemed with honour—Their principles were of that true and sturdy cast, which never suffers a man to yield the right. They had received them from their fathers—They have handed the precious legacy to you ; and they demand of you a conduct corresponding to these principles. You will show yourselves worthy sons of such sires, by manifesting an absolute devotion of yourselves and your all, to the interests of *Religion, Learning and Liberty*.

Evidencies of Christianity.

“The observations upon this subject, already submitted to the reader’s candid attention, will, it is hoped, be considered sufficient to show, that, as far as we can decide the interesting case, we need, greatly need, such a salvation as that exhibited us in the Gospel of Christ.” This, however, is only *presumptive evidence*. Let us, then, proceed to examine *the fact*: Is Jesus Christ worthy of credit, and entitled to our veneration, in the exalted character of a teacher, sent from God—the great Messiah—the saviour of the world?—What a solemn, momentous undertaking!—To sit as judges of his claim to a *divine mission*; while, on the one hand, the Prophets, the Apostles, and Martyrs, appear as advocates for him; and, on the other, Herbert, and Hobbes, and Blount, and Toland, and Shaftsbury, and Collins, and Woolston, and Tindal, and Morgan, and Chubb, and Hume, and Voltaire, with every other Infidel writer, down even to *Thomas Paine*, himself, act the part of *accusers*. And what is the *accusation*? That he was an inoffensive well-meaning man, who, unhappily, *mistook* his real character? No—It must, indeed, be acknowledged that it is not uncommon for unbelievers to speak of Jesus Christ in very respectful terms.—There is in his character—in every word and action—in his whole conduct, something so unassuming, so disinterested, so god-like, that the greatest enemies of his religion seem, for the most part, to observe some moderation in their objections to himself. But why this deference and reserve? If the Gospel of Christ be nothing more than a cunningly devised fable, he can have no claim to such veneration or respect. No—he must, in that case, have been one of the **GREATEST IMPOSTORS** that ever lived! Read, then, with the profoundest attention, and with all the hardihood of impartial criticism, his Life, as it is described by the Evangelists: Observe him in retirement, with the friends to whom he committed himself, with the most unreserved confidence; observe him in public, in the presence of his enemies; follow him, with a scrutinizing eye, from the manger of Bethlehem, to his cross and his tomb; and see whether there be any just ground for this *most infamous imputation*.

To support, at once, the character of God and the character of man, must, surely, be a most difficult undertaking—an undertaking, in which it was absolutely impossible, for the most accomplished impostor to be successful. And yet, this character was well supported—nay, it was dignified and adorned by Jesus Christ.

Observe him as a Teacher sent from God. Does he teach as an impostor. Does he consult the prejudices or the passions of the people, with a view of conciliating their good will, or averting the vengeance of his enemies? Does he spare the self-righteous Pharisee, the haughty Scribe, the licentious Saducce, the cavilling self-sufficient Jewish Doctor; or flatter men in power? No—He unmasks the hypocrite; wrests from the formalist, his vain confidence; exposes to merited contempt, the various cavils of his enemies; and denounces the terrors of the Lord against the ungodly of *every name*.—“Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay the tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin; and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith: Wo unto you, for you are like unto whited sepulchres, which, indeed, appear beautiful outward, but are within, full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so, ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. Wo unto you, also, ye Lawyers! (the Jewish Doctors,) for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers. Ye have taken away the key of knowledge. Ye entered not in yourselves; and them that were entering in, ye hindered.” And to the Pharisees, who undertook to denounce against him the vengeance of Herod, his reply was, “Go ye and tell that fox, that subtle, designing man, behold, I cast out devils, and do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.”—Thus we may see, that the insidious declaration of an enemy, “Thou regardest not the person of man,” was true. *And is this the manner of impostors?*

What inducement could Jesus Christ have to attempt an imposition of this nature? Was he an enemy to the human race? A life of *unexampled beneficence*, will not permit us to adopt such a sentiment. Read, attentively, his most affectionate address to his apostles, on the night before his *passion*. Did he endure the cross, despising the shame, that he might deceive and ruin his best friends, and the companions of his tribulations? It is impossible. That he suffered willingly, we have satisfactory evidence. It was for this purpose that he came into the world. This he repeatedly declares. And of the *interesting fact*, he has afforded convincing proof. Observe him in the garden of Gethsemane. Does he attempt to escape, when his enemies are thrown into such confusion, at the declaration, “I AM HE,” that they went backward and fell to the ground? So far from it, that he allows them time to recover from their consternation; represses the forwardness

of a disciple, who had the courage to draw a sword in his defence; and suffers himself to be apprehended as a malefactor, and conducted to the tribunal of a Roman governor.—But it is not necessary to enlarge upon the subject. The *good confession* which he witnessed before that tribunal; his acknowledging himself to be the ‘Son of God and the king of Israel,’ at the same time, that he knew it would prove an occasion of a most iniquitous sentence against his life, may justly be considered *conclusive evidence* in this case.

Are any disposed to imagine that he might mistake his *real character*? The miracles to which he is said to have appealed, as a test of his high pretensions, were of such a nature as to preclude all possibility of mistake in this instance. No man, in the sober exercise of his senses, could imagine himself to raise the dead; to walk upon the sea; to feed thousands with five loaves and two small fishes; and to cure all manner of diseases, the most inveterate not excepted; if no such thing was done.

But let us examine the *doctrines* which he taught. That some religious regard is due to the greatest and best of beings, is a truth too evident to be called in question. But to ascertain with certainty what this regard is—what the duties are, which we owe to our creator, preserver and benefactor, requires a knowledge both of the nature of God and of man, which far transcends the utmost comprehension of mere *human* intellect. How have the profoundest of the pagan philosophers, been lost and bewildered in their speculations upon the subject! Nay, even with respect to the duties which we owe to our fellow creatures, they, not unfrequently, fell into the most palpable errors. But the *doctrines* of Jesus Christ are *pure and perfect truth*; truth without the least admixture of error; and, what merits particular attention, *just the truth which we need*: nothing superfluous, nothing deficient.

Consider his representations of the being, the attributes and the providence of God. Nothing can be imagined more worthy a being of infinite perfections, or more happily calculated to encourage, in the breast of an humble penitent, the most unreserved confidence in his mercy.

Nor can any thing be more rational and consistent, than the view he has given us of the worship and service, which we owe to the great author of our existence, and of all our mercies. No servile homage or superstitious awe; no burdensome ceremonial observances; no vain pomp or empty splendor; no unnatural abstraction from the world; no sacrifice of a single innocent enjoyment is enjoined. No: it is the voluntary homage of a pure heart, accompanied by the correspondent

homage of holy life, that he requires. "God is a spirit : and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth."

"Thou shalt *love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy,*" seems to be a striking representation of *pagan* as well as of *Rabbinical* ethics—a representation, which will apply to the *most polished*, as well as to the most barbarous nations. And what has been the consequence ? What contention and strife, what cruelty and oppression, what war and blood shed has it not occasioned ! *Widely different* is the doctrine of Jesus Christ upon this subject. "But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you, that you may be the children of your father which is in heaven. For he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you what reward have ye ! do not even the publicans the same ? and if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others ? do not even the publicans so ? be ye therefore perfect, as your father which is in heaven is perfect."—*Beneficent* as he is *beneficent*. And if such be the claims of an enemy, upon the disciples of Jesus, what may not their friends expect ? Nothing, surely, can be more happily calculated to alleviate the miseries, and to promote the welfare of man in the various relations of life, than such morality.

There is also something very peculiar in his method of communicating religious instruction. No abstruse or metaphysical disquisitions ; no parade of wisdom or knowledge ; no far-fetched imagery or similitudes. No : all is plain and artless ; and yet nothing is low or trivial ; nothing unsuitable, either to the exalted character of a divine teacher, or to the humble capacity of the weakest disciple.

And *whence* had this man this wisdom ? not, surely, from the Jewish Rabbis, those blind guides, who, with the books of the old testament in their hands, fell into such palpable absurdities. Nor could it be from the pagan philosophers. We have no reason to think that he ever read any of their productions. But suppose him to have read them all ; a capacity thus accurately to distinguish and separate the wheat from the chaff, and the gold from the dross, would have exalted him far above every uninspired instructor. In this way, however, no such system of religious truth could have been formed. Were the truths to be met with in their voluminous writings selected from that mass of error and impurity, with which they are combined, and digested into the most regular and harmonious system, it would not bear comparison with that which is

ascribed to Jesus Christ by the Evangelists. And how shall we account for this? Was the *greatest impostor* in all the world, the *wisest* of men? To suppose an illiterate Jewish peasant, as Jesus Christ, if an impostor, must have been, to possess such wisdom and knowledge, would be to admit a fact as irreconcilable with the established course of nature, as any of the miracles to be found in the Bible.

It is far from being uncommon for a teacher of morality, nay, it is not uncommon for a religious instructor to contradict and counteract, by his example, his own instructions.—But the life of Jesus Christ was pure as the doctrines which he taught; and spotless as the heavens, whence he descended. Even his judge, who condemned him, was *constrained* to pronounce him *not guilty*; and the perfidious man who betrayed him, was made a *voucher* of his innocence. Never were there any trials like those through which he had to pass. All that malice, and the most refined subtilty could do, to provoke and ensnare him, was often tried, but always in vain. We scarcely know whether to admire most, that wisdom and presence of mind, which always baffled and defeated the most insidious purposes and best concerted plots of his enemies, until his hour was come; or that constellation of every divine and every human virtue, which, like a crown of glory, adorned him wherever he went. It was not so with the prophets, or apostles, or any other teacher. And was the greatest impostor on earth the most upright of men? *It cannot be.*—Read the Life of Socrates, as it is depicted by two of the finest and best cultivated geniuses of Antiquity. Is there any thing in it worthy to be compared with the Life of Jesus, as it is delineated by the Evangelists? This will hardly be alledged even by the most devoted admirers of that illustrious pagan. And how shall we account for the immense disparity? Is the life of Christ *a reality*? Was there ever a personage on earth who lived, and acted, and taught, and suffered, and died, as he is said to have done? If so, he must have been “the holy one of God, and the king of Israel.” Are any of our readers, then, disposed to consider the whole as illusory and fabulous? The Evangelic History is certainly too well authenticated to admit of such a supposition. Nay, this supposition appears to be absolutely precluded, by the *very nature* of the case.

Ransack all the volumes of fictitious history; where the imagination is permitted to range at large in quest of every excellence which can dignify or adorn the character of man. In some of these too much admired productions, you may, not improbably, meet with virtues and accomplishments, to which

no man on earth can have any just pretensions. But they will furnish nothing, which can bear a comparison, with the character of Jesus Christ. Have fishermen and mechanics, then, accomplished what so many of the first and best cultivated geniuses in the world have so often attempted, but always in vain? Have *they* given us a *faultless* representation of an *ideal character*? We might rather ask, have they done more than the most adventurous genius ever presumed to undertake—given us a just representation of a character *absolutely faultless*—a character, uniting in one incomprehensible person, *every human and every divine excellence*? And is it possible, that unlettered impostors; is it possible that any man, could have been successful in an attempt of this nature, provided the Gospel history had been nothing more than a cunningly devised fable? Would it, in that case, have been possible for any man to have introduced into the world such a personage as Jesus Christ is represented to have been, and to have conducted him through such a series of labors, and conflicts, and sufferings, to the heavens, whence he is said to have descended, in a manner so perfectly corresponding with his extraordinary character, and the glorious ministry assigned him? We may safely venture to answer in the negative. No—the Evangelists must have had a *real* character to describe. We are, however, far from imagining, that even this would satisfactorily account for what is peculiar in their style and manner of writing.

There is in them, as appears to us, an unaffected dignity, a divine simplicity, and an inexpressible charm, which it must have been absolutely impossible for ignorant impostors to have *assumed*. And this we are constrained to consider a *striking evidence*, that the Evangelists wrote as they *were moved* by the Holy Ghost.

Much pains have been employed, and that to the best of purposes, by christian advocates, to show that the books of our gospel history are *genuine*—that they were written and published in the apostolic age, and that by the persons whose *names they bear*. This is well. In this important undertaking, they have been completely successful. And their success has furnished irresistible evidence of the truth of the gospel.* We are, however, far from considering measures of this nature indispensably necessary. No: the life of Jesus Christ, as it is delineated by the Evangelists is, as we think, sufficient to convince every attentive and candid reader of the New

* See Lardner's Credibility of the Gospel History, Paley's Evidences, Doddridge's Lectures, &c.

Testament that he was not an impostor, but *a teacher sent from God, the great Messiah, the saviour of the world.*

[The testimony of the Apostles shall be considered in our next number.]

For the Virginia Evangelical and Literary Magazine.

THE KALEIDOSCOPE.

My young friend, Eugenius, called in last evening to show me this famous new toy of Dr. Brewster's. 'And here,' said he, giving me something like a small spy-glass, 'here is the Kaleidoscope.'

'The Kaleidoscope,' said I, 'and what is that! it is all Greek to me.'

'It is Greek indeed; but it means in English, *an instrument to see beautiful things with*'—

'What! does it show us ladies or angels'—

'Not exactly. But come, put your eye to the small end, and you will see—what you shall see.'

Sure enough, I looked in it; and then I saw a great variety of very pretty little patterns of flowers, or some such things, I hardly know what to call them, more curious than any I ever saw before.

'Well well,' said I, 'it is certainly a fine toy; and it may be of some use too. But come, one good turn deserves another. You have shown me your Kaleidoscope, and I will show you mine.'

'Yours? have you one indeed?'

'Indeed have I, and worth a thousand of this. It is in fact a true Kaleidoscope; and shows you *beautiful things* sure enough. Only look in it well, and you will see things *more to be desired than gold, yea than much fine gold*. You will see all heaven opened before you, bowers of bliss, fountains of youth, rivers of pleasure-flowing through trees of life, saints and angels with roses of love on their cheeks, and amaranths of immortality on their brows. Above all, you will see the face of one who is *the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely*. In short, you will see an endless succession and variety of delights and wonders, that *eye hath not seen, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive*.

'Well now, I see you are as fond of riddles as ever. But let me see this wonderful instrument at once.'


'Here it is at your service—the christian Kaleidoscope—called in English, a Pocket Bible.'

EUPHAINOR.

To the Editor of the Virginia Evangelical and Literary Magazine.

SIR—The importance of female education seems, now, to be very generally admitted. And it is certain that the subject attracts much greater attention, than was formerly paid to it. But it may very well be doubted whether the plans pursued in this country are characterised by wisdom. For my own part, I am not at all satisfied on this subject, and I wish for information. Might not your attention, or that of your correspondents be worthily occupied by a matter so deeply involving the best interests of society? You, doubtless, have considered the extent and power of female influence in civilized and christian countries; and perceive the importance of giving a right direction to the habits and sentiments of those who partially, at least, regulate the conduct of all the rest. You are, then, earnestly requested to make this a subject of discussion in the pages of your magazine.—If you can introduce a better system of instruction; and especially, if you can persuade parents to subject their daughters to a course of discipline, sufficient to invigorate their minds, and bring them to something like maturity, you will perform a most acceptable service to the country.

OBSERVER.

 The editor acknowledges the importance of this subject; and is heartily disposed to gratify the wish of *Observer*, as far as it is in his power. He therefore invites his correspondents to consider the request, and enable him, through the medium of the Magazine, to afford useful instruction to parents anxious to give a good education to their daughters.

At present the editor has only a remark or two to offer in relation to some mistakes, which have a very injurious effect on the moral and intellectual character of young females.

1. That which is only *ornamental* is valued beyond that which is *useful*.

2. The term of education is *too short* to allow of a proper course of study; or admit of that improvement, which ought to be the object of every parent in sending a daughter to school.

3. The minds of children are distracted by the multiplicity of studies in which they are engaged. The satchel of a school-girl contains half as many subjects as an Encyclopedia. Hence no accurate knowledge of any one thing is acquired; and there is that sort of general smattering, which puffs up with intolerable vanity, while it qualifies for nothing useful.

The correction of these three mistakes, would, we are persuaded, produce a wonderful change in the state of the female mind ; the beneficial effects of which on society at large would be diffusive and powerful. We have just made these remarks to show Observer that we take an interest in the subject of *his* or *her* letter ; and to give a pledge that it shall not be forgotten or neglected.—We take a deep interest in whatever concerns the welfare of the sex ; and most earnestly wish that, universally, the influence of our fair countrywomen may be directed by wisdom and piety.

Religious Intelligence.

A PASTORAL LETTER,
From the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in the U. States, to the Churches under their care.

DEAR BRETHREN,

The time in which we address you is very important and interesting.—The free conversation on the state of religion has exhibited abundant evidence, that the Churches under our care have never been in a more prosperous condition than during the last year. In the year immediately preceeding, perhaps, special revivals were more remarkable and more numerous, but as it relates to the general extension of religious influence, the organization of new congregations, and the wide spreading success of Missionary labours, the aspect of the Church has probably never been so promising as at the present time—and when in addition to this we reflect on the various institutions, not only in our own connexion, but in the Christian world at large, calculated to extend the kingdom of our Redeemer ; the zeal and liberality with which those institutions are supported ; and the extensively beneficial effects which they are every day producing ; we are obliged to consider the present moment as forming an important era in the annals of religion. A general movement of Protestant Christendom has taken place ; an unusual blessing has descended on the Church of Christ : and we are pro-

bably approaching some day of the Son of Man of no usual or ordinary character. The present therefore is no doubt a favorable time, not only for extending the influence, but for advancing the purity of the church ; for the extirpation of any errors, and the abolition of any unchristian practices which may have found entrance among us, during the long period of comparative darkness and desertion through which we have passed. And although we do not believe that any thing immoral or vicious is more prevalent now than at some former periods, or even as much so ; yet the existence of such things at the present time, strikes the minds of serious christians with an appearance of greater deformity, and fills them with more pungent regret, as it is exhibited in such dark contrast with that promising and wonderful aspect of things so extensively displayed by the christian world. The free conversation on the state of religion has brought some such things to our view, against which we feel constrained to bear our decided testimony ; and we would enter upon this duty with the tenderness and meekness, but at the same time with the firmness and authority which becomes a Judicatory of the Church of Christ.

The first thing we shall notice is the crime of *Drunkeness*. This crime has at all times been a curse to our country, and has often made lamentable inroads upon our Church. We

are convinced that it may be opposed more successfully by prevention than in any other way. When the character of drunkenness is fully formed, the unhappy victim is lost to those motives which ordinarily influence all other classes of men. In this state of things nothing but a miracle of divine grace can effect his reformation. The certain and acknowledged prospect of the wreck of his family, his fortune, and his character; and even of the ruin of his immortal soul, is not sufficient to arrest his course: and yet perhaps the same man may formerly have been in such a state of equilibrium or indecision upon this subject, that the smallest motives might have prevented the formation of a habit, which in its maturity has become so irresistible. This consideration is certainly sufficient to justify an effort for saving our fellow men from the domination of so destructive a vice. For this purpose, we earnestly recommend to the officers and members of our Church, to abstain even from the common use of ardent spirits. Such a voluntary privation as this, with its motives publicly avowed, will not be without its effect in cautioning our fellow christians and fellow citizens, against the encroachment of intoxication; and we have the more confidence in recommending this course as it has already been tried with success in several sections of our Church.

The vice of *Gambling* has also been forced upon our attention. We indeed hope that few, or perhaps none of our actual professors, have indulged themselves in the practice of what they consider as coming under the denomination of *Gambling*. But perhaps there are some addicted to this practice who have evinced a predelection for our Church, and forms of worship, and who are not unwilling to receive the word of admonition from us. Such we would earnestly exhort to consider in the most serious manner, the consequences of the course they are pursuing, and the awful lessons which the experience of the world, is every day exhibiting on this subject. But it is further our duty to testify, that all encouragement of lotteries, and purchasing

of lottery tickets; all attendance on horse-racing, and betting on such, or on any other occasions; and all attempts of whatever kind to acquire gain without giving an equivalent, involve the *Gambling* principle, and participate in the guilt which attaches to that vice.

On the fashionable, though as we believe dangerous amusements, of *Theatrical Exhibitions* and *Dancing*, we deem it necessary to make a few observations. The Theatre we have always considered as a school of immorality. If any person wishes for honest conviction on this subject, let him attend to the character of that mass of matter, which is generally exhibited on the stage. We believe all will agree, that comedies at least, with a few exceptions, are of such a description that a virtuous and modest person cannot attend the representation of them, without the most painful and embarrassing sensations. If, indeed, custom has familiarized the scene, and these painful sensations are no longer felt, it only proves that the person in question, has lost some of the best sensibilities of our nature; that the strongest safeguard of virtue has been taken down, and that the moral character has undergone a serious depreciation.

With respect to *Dancing*, we think it necessary to observe, that however plausible it may appear to some, it is not the less dangerous on account of that plausibility. It is not from those things which the world acknowledges to be most wrong, that the greatest danger is to be apprehended to religion, especially as it relates to the young. When the practice is carried to its highest extremes, all admit the consequences to be fatal; and why not then apprehend danger, even from its incipient stages. It is certainly in all its stages, a fascinating and infatuating practice. Let it once be introduced, and it is difficult to give it limits.—It steals away our precious time, dissipates religious impressions, and hardens the heart. To guard you, beloved brethren, against its wiles and its fascinations, we earnestly recommend that you will consult that

sobriety which the sacred pages require. We also trust, that you will attend with the meekness and docility becoming the christian character, to the admonitions on this subject, of those whom you have chosen to watch for your souls. And now, beloved brethren, that you may be guarded from the dangers we have pointed out, and from all other dangers which beset the path of life and obstruct our common salvation, and that the great head of the church may have you in his holy keeping is our sincere and affectionate prayer. Amen.

J. J. JANEWAY, Moderator.

June, 1818.

Resolved, that the General Assembly recommend, and they do hereby recommend, to the Pastors and Sessions of the different Churches under their care, to assemble as often as they may deem necessary during the year, their baptized children with their parents, to recommend said children to God in prayer, explain to them the nature of their Baptism; the relation which they sustain to the Church; and the obligations which their Baptism has imposed on them.

SECOND REPORT

Of the American Bible Society.

We have anxiously waited for a copy of this report; and have at length received it. Our limits prohibit the entire publication. The reader will find the most important particulars in the following abstract.

One object of the society, as expressed in the constitution, is to furnish great districts of the American continent with well executed stereotype plates, for the cheap and extensive diffusion of the scriptures throughout regions which are now scantily supplied at a discouraging expense. In conformity to this important intention, the board of directors have determined to locate a set of octavo, and another of duodecimo plates in Lexington, Kentucky, on such conditions that the Bible Society of that state may supply the wants of its district, and at the same time, perform the office of agent for the national institution, in affording

a supply to the growing population of the west. This is a most important measure, and from it we anticipate the happiest results.

The cause of our "*brethren of the woods*" has not been forgotten by the national society. The only alternative in affording instruction to the Indians was to teach them English, and furnish to them the Bible in the common translation; or to translate the scriptures into their languages. It was a difficult subject. On full consideration the managers adopted the latter measure, and have determined to publish the gospel in the *Mohawk* and *Delaware* languages. The former of these, it is stated, will serve for the five nations, the *Tuskaroras* and the *Hurons*. The latter, for the *Monsees*, the *Shawanese*, the *Kickapoos*, the *Kaskaskias*, the *Miamis*, and the *Chippewas* or *Algonquins*. Parts of the New Testament have already been translated into both Mohawk and Delaware; and a thousand copies of each part ordered to be printed for distribution. The managers expect to be supported, by a christian community, in this arduous attempt. We possess the country of the Indians; let us make them this compensation.

The board of directors while thus engaged, have not forgotten the claims, which multitudes on the American continent, who speak the French and Spanish languages, have on their Bible-philanthropy. Stereotype plates have been ordered; and it is expected, will soon be employed in printing the Bible in both tongues.

The Rev. Frederick Leo, a German protestant, has, by his extraordinary exertions, procured the printing of two excellent editions of the New-Testament in French, for distribution among the people of France. In this work, Mr. Leo encountered great expense and labour. The board of managers, determined to assist and encourage him by a donation of five hundred dollars. This donation has been received; and the gratitude called forth by it, has been well expressed by Mr. Leo in a letter to the Rev. Dr. Mason, the secretary for foreign correspondence.

The number of Bibles issued from the Depository last year is 17,594; which added to the issues of the preceding year, (6,410) makes the total issued since the organization of the society 24,004 Bibles.

The funds of the society for the second year amounted to the sum of \$40,221 23.

The Auxiliary societies amount to about one hundred and fifty.

We hope to be able, before long, perhaps in our next No. to present something like a complete view of Missionary efforts now making by various christians in the United States. Such labors of love ought to be recorded as examples worthy of imitation, and of praise. They are recorded in the imperishable annals of eternity; and will be acknowledged by the sovereign arbiter of life and death in that day when the final sentence will be pronounced on all. If the gift of a cup of water to a disciple will not lose its reward; we may be assured that the gift of the bread of life to perishing souls; that the pouring of streams from the river of Salvation "into dry and thirsty lands where no water is," will not be unacknowledged in the last day.

While we are waiting for information to enable us to present the general view which has been promised, it may not be amiss to remark that the Missionary business has been carried on by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church in the United States much more extensively than many of our readers are aware. This body has a board of Domestic Missions, under whose direction more than forty Missionaries are employed as itinerants for a longer or shorter time every year. For the support in part of this great institution, auxiliary societies are formed in many Presbyteries, and Missionary Associations for their aid in congregations and neighborhoods. It is hoped that this system will be extended, and that by a great number of small contributions, a large fund will be raised for the purpose of sending the Gospel to the destitute in our country. The great deficiency of the means of religious instruc-

tion, and the unexampled increase of our population, loudly demand the most zealous exertions, and the hearty co-operation of all who love the Gospel, and are concerned for the best interests of their country. The success of the few attempts made in Virginia, shows what zeal and perseverance may effect. A pleasing instance of this has lately come to our knowledge. About six weeks ago an auxiliary institution was commenced by some ladies belonging to the little congregation of Hanover town. And a few days ago, Mr. D. J. Burr, Treasurer of the Missionary Society of Hanover Presbytery, received from that source \$114 12½. A few similar examples might be mentioned—We hope that they will stimulate those who hear of them to imitate this laudable charity; and that thus the Missionary fund will be commensurate to the demands made upon it.

We are happy to learn that Mr. Larned, a missionary sent by the G. Assembly's Board of Missions, has been well received at New Orleans. A large and splendid house of worship is erecting for him, and he is to be settled there at a salary of \$4000 per annum.

AGRICULTURAL.

The Agricultural Society of Virginia, has recently held a meeting in Richmond. It is our intention, as soon as we can find room, to embody the information communicated by the members, in our Journal. The promotion of general improvement is our object. The science of Agriculture is most important; and we rejoice in the efforts made to advance it in our country. Apart from the direct improvement to be derived from this institution, we regard it as an addition to the number of Associations by which attachment to our native soil, and interest in the welfare of our own state is increased.

We are told that hog's lard and whale oil, mixed to the consistency of thin paste, and rubbed on young fruit trees, will effectually prevent their being barked by hares or rabbits. One coat of this ointment, is sufficient for a season.